

Vets Compete in Wheelchair Games | The Army in the Pacific

The Official U.S. Army Magazine

October 2005
www.soldiersmagazine.com

Soldiers



The Army Responds to

Hurricane Katrina



Cover Story — Page 24
 Soldiers of the 82nd Airborne Division's 505th Infantry Regiment patrol New Orleans' French Quarter in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.
 — Photo by
 SGT Michael J. Carden

CONTENTS

Soldiers | October 2005 | Volume 60, No. 10



Page 12



Page 32



Page 42



Page 45

Features

The Army Responds to Hurricane Katrina 4
 In the aftermath of one of the worst natural disasters in American history, the Army poured Soldiers, aircraft and equipment into the stricken areas.

The Army in the Pacific 12
 In this exclusive interview, U.S. Army, Pacific, commander LTG John M. Brown III talks about USARPAC's missions and capabilities.

Explosions in Paradise 18
 A massive cleanup effort is clearing unexploded — and largely forgotten — World War II ordnance from the Big Island of Hawaii.

Training CSMs in Colombia 24
 U.S. Army, South, is helping the Colombian army transform its senior enlisted ranks.

USARSO's Continuing Mission 28
 U.S. Army, South, is undertaking vital missions throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

Vets Compete 32
 The National Wheelchair Games in Minneapolis draw veterans from throughout the country.

Mastering Mine Protection 42
 Alabama National Guard Soldiers are operating a unique mine warfare school in Iraq.

Defenders of Baghdad 45
 Ceremonies in Baghdad mark the activation of the U.S.-trained 5th Brigade of Iraq's 6th Division.

Fighting Afghanistan's Taliban 46
 Coalition forces are using innovative tactics to combat the Taliban's influence in the Shah Wali Kot district.

Departments

2 Mail Call
 36 On Point
 38 Legal Forum
 40 Message Center
 48 Focus On People

•soldiersmagazine.com



Page 18

THE national strategy of the United States calls in part for the Army to be engaged around the world to help shape the global political environment and respond to any crisis that may arise. Iraq and Afghanistan are the most visible examples of that worldwide mission, and we will continue to bring you reports from the Middle East. In August we extended our global coverage to Army activities in the Horn of Africa.

Now broadening our scope to other parts of the world, we offer stories from staffer Steve Harding and contributing writer Kevin Sieling, who report on two of the Army's largest geographic missions: in the Pacific Rim and in Central and South America. The articles include interviews with top commanders and perspectives on how the Army is improving local conditions and preparing other forces to participate in the global war on terrorism.

Then turning to Army sports, the wounded-warrior program is the subject of Beth Reece's story about veterans competing in the 2005 Wheelchair Games. The games test participants' strength, agility and speed in a number of events. Meanwhile, Army coaches and athletic directors are

using the games to scout and recruit Soldiers who may qualify to participate in the Army's World Class Athlete program or the U.S. Paralympics.

Gil High
Editor in Chief

Statement of Ownership

1. Publication Title Soldiers		2. Issue Frequency Monthly	
3. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below August 2005		4. Annual Subscription Price \$10.00	
5. Owner The Secretary of the Army Department of the Army Washington, DC 20315-5001		6. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities. None	
7. Tax Status For-profit or nonprofit status, and other information		8. Publication Title Soldiers	
9. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below August 2005		10. Issue Frequency Monthly	
11. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below August 2005		12. Issue Frequency Monthly	

13. Publication Title Soldiers		14. Issue Frequency Monthly	
15. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below August 2005		16. Issue Frequency Monthly	
17. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below August 2005		18. Issue Frequency Monthly	
19. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below August 2005		20. Issue Frequency Monthly	

Soldiers

The Official U.S. Army Magazine

Secretary of the Army
Francis J. Harvey

Chief of Staff
GEN Peter J. Schoomaker

Chief of Public Affairs
BG Vincent K. Brooks

Chief, Command Information
LTC Joseph M. Yoswa

Soldiers Staff

Editor in Chief: Gil High
Production Editor: Steve Harding
Art Director: Helen Hall VanHoose
Senior Editor: Heike Hasenauer
Associate Art Director: Paul Henry Crank
NCOIC: MSG Lisa Gregory
Photojournalist: Beth Reece
Special Projects Editor: Don Wagner
Graphic Designer: LeRoy Jewell
Executive Secretary: Arthur Benckert

Printing: Gateway Press, Inc., Louisville, Ky

Soldiers (ISSN 0093-8440) is published monthly by the Army Chief of Public Affairs to provide the Total Army with information on people, policies, operations, technical developments, trends and ideas of and about the Department of the Army. The views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army.

■ Send submissions and correspondence to Editor, **Soldiers**, 9325 Gunston Road, Suite S108, Fort Belvoir, VA 22060-5581. Phone: DSN 656-4486 or commercial 703-806-4486, or send e-mail to soldiers@belvoir.army.mil.

■ Unless otherwise indicated (and except for "by permission" and copyright items), material may be reprinted provided credit is given to **Soldiers** and the author.

■ All uncredited photographs by U.S. Army.

■ The Secretary of the Army has determined that the publication of this periodical is necessary in the transaction of the public business as required by law of the department. Funds for printing this publication were approved by the Secretary of the Army in accordance with the provisions of Army Regulation 25-30. Library of Congress call number: U1.A827.

■ Periodicals postage paid at Fort Belvoir, VA, and additional mailing offices.

■ Individual subscriptions: Subscriptions can be purchased through the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402.

■ POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Fort Belvoir address above.

Soldiers
Recipient of Awards of Magazine Excellence



Letters from the Field

Mountain Combat

AS the author of the June article "Documenting the 10th" and as a member of the mighty 10th Mountain Division, I appreciate the comments James Cota made in his letter to the editor in the August issue. The feats he and others accomplished in training and in war during World War II were no doubt exceptional.

But Cota is wrong to think "Soldiers today can't understand what it was like to fight in rugged mountains, in the snow, against an enemy who was unmatched in tactical capability." Soldiers today understand it perfectly well. Afghanistan's landscape, where the 10th Mtn. Div. has spent lots of cold nights in deep snow at 9,000 feet above sea level and higher, makes the Appenine mountains of Italy look like tiny pimples on a teenager.

Soldiers fight a deadly and deeply entrenched enemy daily in these conditions, and they do it without the detailed training the founding fathers of the 10th received.

SGT Cain S. Claxton
via e-mail

Focus on Combat Camera

I WAS very pleased to see the July article "Ready, Shoot, Document."

Combat camera and public affairs units cover many other units as they perform their jobs, but no one ever covers these recording units.

Information plays a large role in today's world, and public affairs/combat camera units disseminate information about our armed services that influences not only the American public's view of our military, but the world's view as well.

It's nice to see combat camera getting some coverage in **Soldiers** — now maybe we can get some notice from civilian publications as well.

Thank you for a well-written article.

SGT Danny E McCormick
via e-mail

Next month: A Story of Heroism

On Oct. 30, 1950, CPL Tibor Rubin defended his unit from being overrun by the Chinese 39th Army in Korea. The next day, Rubin secured the Taegu-Pusan Road so his company could make its way to the Pusan Perimeter.

Then, for two and a half years as a prisoner of war, Rubin risked his life to keep his fellow prisoners hopeful and alive.

Watch for this Medal of Honor recipient's inspiring story of bravery — and eyewitness accounts — in our November issue. Additional information is available at www.army.mil/moh.



More on Marghella

I TOOK offense to SGT Carla Marghella's letter in the July issue.

Not only am I a female Soldier, I am also the first female Soldier to be assigned to the 1st Battalion, 321st Field Artillery Regiment, at Fort Bragg, N.C.

Sure it was uncomfortable being the first and only female (until recently). During field problems I was the only female out there surrounded by 120 to 130 male Soldiers.

The male Soldiers even refused to see me for treatment (I am a medic); they all went to see the other male medic who was out there with me.

I found out later that the battalion had had so many equal opportunity classes before I got there that all the other Soldiers were scared to talk to me for fear of an EO complaint. But after many field problems the guys started seeing me as a Soldier and not as a female.

We all are here to support the same mission. I am very proud to serve with the guys that I do, and I would be honored to serve with them in combat.

SPC LoriBeth Griffith
via e-mail

RCI in Hot Topics

YOUR recent issue of Hot Topics featuring the Army's Residential Communities Initiative (RCI) came at a very opportune time, as we here at Fort Leavenworth have completed our Community Development and Management Plan and have forwarded it to DA for review with transfer planned for next April.

Your informative articles on RCI are what we needed to help us as we write our weekly article for our post newspaper and prepare briefings for the Soldiers stationed here.

Marie R. Meador
Fort Leavenworth, Kan.

Soldiers values your opinion
To comment, keep your remarks to under 150 words, include your name, rank and address and send them to:

Mail Call, **Soldiers**,
9325 Gunston Road, Ste. S108,
Fort Belvoir, VA 22060-5581,
or e-mail: soldiers@belvoir.army.mil





➤ A National Guard utility truck fords the floodwaters left by Hurricane Katrina to bring supplies to the Superdome in downtown New Orleans. Tens of thousands of displaced citizens sought shelter at the dome, but were then evacuated to facilities elsewhere in Louisiana and in other states.

➤ 2LT Nick Loudon (*right*), a platoon leader in Company C, 2nd Battalion, 505th Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, and his radio operator search for locations on their map during a presence patrol Sept. 4 in New Orleans' French Quarter district.

PH1 Jeremy L. Gristham, USN



SGT Michael J. Carden

The Army Responds to Hurricane Katrina

Story by
Heike Hasenauer

DAYS before the Labor Day weekend, as Americans planned their annual end-of-summer outings, one of the worst natural disasters in U.S. history struck the Gulf Coast.

Hurricane Katrina — said to be the worst storm to hit the region since 1969, when Hurricane Camille plowed through Mississippi with Category 5 winds and left 143 people dead — packed Category 4 winds that

decimated entire communities in its 90,000-square-mile path, according to Federal Emergency Management Agency reports. Worst hit were cities in Mississippi and Louisiana.

In New Orleans, La., a city situated below sea level, breached levees allowed walls of water to rush into the city and created what witnesses described as a giant lake that consumed whole neighborhoods.

Officials reported 80 percent of New Orleans was under water. The city's mayor, Ray Nagin, said some one million people had evacuated New

Orleans a day before the deadly storm hit. But tens of thousands remained. Many of them sought shelter on rooftops. Many of those whose homes were destroyed were holed up at the New Orleans Superdome for days. Officials reported that some 40,000 people came through the Superdome.

services: There was no power, no drinking water, and no food for the initial first few days.

Like the horrific tsunami that struck South Asia in December 2004, Katrina left destruction and death in its path. At press time, some 218 people were confirmed dead in Mississippi. In Louisiana some 279 had been confirmed dead, but Nagin said thousands more would likely be found dead when the floodwaters receded, allowing search-and-rescue teams to retrieve bodies.



▲ Flood waters caused by breaches in the levees around New Orleans inundated sections of the city, halting surface transportation and polluting drinking water stocks.

Orleans a day before the deadly storm hit. But tens of thousands remained. Many of them sought shelter on rooftops. Many of those whose homes were destroyed were holed up at the New Orleans Superdome for days. Officials reported that some 40,000 people came through the Superdome.

Several hundred thousand people in and around New Orleans and Gulfport, Miss., and Mobile, Ala., were left homeless. Tens of thousands were evacuated to shelters in other states. In Houston, Texas, the Astrodome was filled to capacity with some 16,000 evacuees, officials reported.

As in the aftermath of the World

Trade Center attacks of 9/11, families were torn apart and separated in the chaos that ensued during and after the hurricane, and people posted pictures of loved ones in hopes that someone watching TV would see the photos and provide clues as to the whereabouts of the missing.

While National Guard units were heavily engaged in the war on terrorism abroad, Guard Soldiers still at home were quickly pressed into action to aid in the relief effort.

"There are some 337,000 National Guard Soldiers in the nation who we can bring to bear to respond to this catastrophe," said National Guard Bureau spokesman MAJ John Toniolli



Staff Sgt. Jacob N. Bailey, USAF

▲ A victim of Hurricane Katrina arrives via military helicopter at New Orleans International Airport. Search-and-rescue crews brought in wave after wave of evacuees, and emergency medical crews were on hand to provide care to those with special needs.

► After a two-day bus drive military retirees evacuated from the Gulf Coast are greeted by military and civilian volunteers at the Armed Forces Retirement Home (AFRH) in Washington, D.C. The veterans will be housed at the AFRH until their facility in Gulfport, Miss., can be repaired, which is estimated to take more than a year.



Staff Sgt. Amber K. Whittington, USAF



PH Jeremy L. Grisham, USN

▲ Aerial view showing the rising flood waters threatening the entire downtown of New Orleans, including the famed Superdome, on Aug. 31. Tens of thousands of displaced citizens sought shelter at the dome before, during and after Hurricane Katrina, but were forced to evacuate as floodwaters continued to rise throughout the area.

when asked if National Guard Soldiers were spread thin because of their presence in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Immediately after the storm, the National Guard launched search-and-rescue, humanitarian-aid and security missions on the Gulf coast.

Some 200 Louisiana Guard Soldiers were working with local security officials at the Superdome in New Orleans to assist with traffic control and distribution of food, water and ice, Defense Department officials reported.

Soldiers also assisted local law-enforcement officials to prevent looting.

On Sept. 1 the Alabama National Guard deployed 1,400 Army and Air Guard personnel to Mississippi to provide security and help local officials re-establish communication networks. The Alabama Guard also sent 40 members of the 20th Special Forces Group to Louisiana to help with search-and-rescue efforts.

By Sept. 8 almost 60,000 service members were deployed to the four

states affected by the hurricane, Defense Department officials said. Some 41,500 of these were Army and Air Guard members, while about 17,500 were active-duty personnel.

In addition, some 400 Army Reserve Soldiers were on duty in the devastated areas. These included about 50 Soldiers and five CH-47 Chinook helicopters from the 159th Aviation Regiment at Fort Eustis, Va., as well as members of the 206th and 647th Transportation companies and their cargo trucks. Reserve mortuary-affairs Soldiers from the 49th Quartermaster Co. at Fort Lee, Va., and the 311th QM Co. at Fort Buchanan, P.R., also deployed to the Gulf Coast.

Soldiers helped civilian law-enforcement officials protect critical facilities, prevented looting and enforced curfews, Tonioli said.

Early in the recovery effort military aircraft evacuated people in New Orleans to a field hospital and staging area at the Louis Armstrong New Or-

leans International Airport. In Mississippi, Camp Shelby, a National Guard training site, opened to evacuees.

Alabama Army and Air National Guard officials said some 3,000 of their members — including military police, engineers and aviators — were supporting disaster-relief operations.

Additional support included that of the following units:

A 15-member team from the Arkansas National Guard rescued patients stranded at the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in New Orleans. Arkansas Guard Soldiers also opened two of their state's Guard readiness centers to house evacuees.

Three helicopters from III Corps at Fort Hood, Texas, were deployed to Baton Rouge, La., and two additional III Corps helicopters were in Mississippi to help with search-and-rescue operations and shuttle damage-assessment teams around the stricken areas.

Meanwhile, U.S. Transportation



Tech. Sgt. Jerry Morrison, USAF

▲ Army National Guard members from Jackson, Miss., load bags of ice on a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter from the 1st Battalion, 131st Aviation Regiment. The ice was then flown into areas affected by Hurricane Katrina.

▼ MAJ Timothy A. Doherty of the Georgia Army National Guard's 148th Medical Co. helps an elderly man up from a school building near downtown New Orleans after the man was stranded by the flood waters that ravaged the city.

PH: Brian Aho, USN



Master Sergeant Michael E. Best, USAF



Command moved eight civilian swift-water rescue teams from California to Louisiana, according to Northern Command officials.

In an address to the nation days after the disaster, President George W. Bush announced the formation of a Cabinet-level task force headed by Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff. The task force was to coordinate the federal response to what Bush called "one of the worst natural disasters in our nation's history."

On Sept. 2 Bush signed into law a \$10.5 billion hurricane-relief package. In the meantime, the American Red Cross reported it had received more money than ever before in response to a U.S. disaster. Money also poured in to hurricane-relief coffers from major U.S. corporations, private citizens and foreign governments.

Joint Task Force Katrina, at Camp

Shelby, coordinated support operations among U.S. Northern Command (which is coordinating DOD's active-duty support for the relief effort), other DOD elements and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

At press time, seven ships and 60 helicopters had been obligated to the relief efforts. And Air Force Brig. Gen. Terry Scherling, deputy director of antiterrorism and homeland defense

for the Joint Staff, told reporters that the military would likely provide up to 5,000 hospital beds to the affected area, some of them aboard the Navy hospital ship USNS *Comfort*.

The 82nd Airborne Division and 1st Cavalry Div. also sent troops to the Gulf Coast. And the Army Corps of Engineers had engineers working to pump water out of New Orleans and begin planning for rebuilding.

MSG James M. Bowman



► SPC James Meidl, a heavy-equipment operator with the Mississippi Guard's 890th Engineering Battalion,, clears hurricane debris from a road in Pass Christian, Miss.

▼ Hundreds of homes in Biloxi, Miss., and elsewhere along the Gulf Coast were completely destroyed by Katrina's winds, which gusted in excess of 140 miles per hour.

Tech. Sgt. Mike Buytas, USAF



▲ MAJ Todd Berry of the 82nd Airborne Division points out key locations on a map of New Orleans. The paratroopers helped patrol the city to provide security for relief operations.

◀ National Guard Soldiers from Biloxi, Miss., load water aboard a truck at Gulfport International Airport, one of the main staging areas for Hurricane Katrina relief efforts in Mississippi.



The Army in the Pacific

Interview by Steve Harding



U.S. Army, Pacific,
Commander LTG John M. Brown III

WITH ongoing operations in Iraq and Afghanistan continuing to capture headlines throughout the nation and around the world, the Army's vital mission in the Pacific Rim area has received little attention of late.

A vast region — it covers 16 time zones, encompasses more than 50 percent of the world's surface and is home to 60 percent of the world's population — the Pacific Rim has long been of strategic importance to the United States. Various conflicts continue to simmer in the region,

which has also seen terrorist acts committed by al Qaeda and its allies.

In this exclusive interview, U.S. Army, Pacific, commander LTG John M. Brown III talks about USARPAC's missions and capabilities, both within its own area of operations and around the world.

Q What do you feel is USARPAC's most important mission?

Brown: As with every other command in the Army today, USARPAC's primary mission is to ensure that we provide well-trained, well-equipped and competently led forces to fight the global war on terrorism. USARPAC undertakes this primary mission in two ways.

First, we send individual Soldiers

and entire units through U.S. Pacific Command to U.S. Central Command for use as part of operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

Second, we provide those same types of forces to U.S. PACOM for operations in this theater. Those operations can be part of PACOM's theater security and cooperation program; engagement with the 43 other nations that operate in the Asia-Pacific region; or peacekeeping or counter-terrorism

operations such as those in the Philippines.

But USARPAC also has a second mission that is growing in importance every day, and one which certainly complements our primary mission. That second mission is to execute our part of the Army campaign plan for transformation.

USARPAC has been designated as the third of the Army's five upper tier operational Units of Employment,

and almost every one of our brigades and divisions, and all of our major headquarters, will be undergoing transformation over the next two years to configure them into the Army's new modular and expeditionary structure. That new structure will certainly better enable USARPAC to provide, and command and control, forces in the war on terrorism or any other military operation.

Q How then do you feel about USARPAC's readiness to carry out those missions?

Brown: I'm very confident that we are sending the very best-trained, best-equipped and superbly led units into OIF and OEF. I base that assessment on the performance of the thousands of Pacific-based Soldiers who have participated in operations in Iraq and Afghanistan over the past two years.

At the same time, we remain fully engaged within our own theater. While 24,000 Pacific-based Soldiers participated in OIF and OEF last year, we actually increased the number of

engagements — exercises, combined training or real-world operations here in the Pacific. That wasn't an easy thing to do at a time when we were sending so many Soldiers outside our own theater.

But despite the challenge of increasing the number of our in-theater engagements, it was necessary because there is a war against terrorism going on here in the Pacific. If we don't look

after this theater, we may have to pay a heavier price in the future.

Q What do you feel is USARPAC's greatest strength?

Brown: While I believe we have many strengths — the caliber of our Soldiers and the thoroughness of our training, for example — I believe that

➤ USARPAC Soldiers regularly train with troops from such other Pacific Rim nations as Japan, South Korea and Australia.

Photos on this and following pages courtesy U.S. Army, Pacific.





“People tend to forget that the Pacific is the U.S. military’s geographically largest theater...”

perhaps our greatest strengths are, first, our ability to master the vast distances we encounter in this theater of operations and, second, our ability to maintain close working relationships with other nations in the region.

People tend to forget that the Pacific is the U.S. military’s geographically largest theater, and that the distances here are staggering. Yet we have not allowed the tyranny of distance to prevent us from conducting the same sorts of operations that have been so successful in other, smaller theaters.

As part of the U.S. Pacific Command team — along with the Navy, Marines and Air Force — we undertake the multinational exercises that are such a vital part of our ability to maintain the interoperability that is essential to successful coalition operations.

I think the international response to the recent tsunamis in South Asia is an excellent example of why it is so vital for USARPAC and PACOM to do whatever is necessary to maintain that interoperability with other nations in the region. Because we have trained and interacted with our counterparts in such nations as India, Thailand and Australia, we in Pacific Command were able to begin providing vital assistance within a matter of hours.

◀ Though based in Alaska, the paratroopers of the 1st Bn., 501st Inf. Regt., can rapidly deploy anywhere in the Pacific.



▲ Soldiers of USARPAC’s Alaska-based 4th Bn., 23rd Inf., train with the Strykers they recently took with them to Iraq.

Q While the nation has heard much about the fine work done by the Navy, Marines and Air Force in the wake of the tsunamis, we have perhaps not heard as much about the Army’s role in the relief effort. What role did USARPAC play?

Brown: We were probably the minor partner in the relief effort, in that the nature of the damage — for example, the destruction of road networks — dictated that most of the relief effort went in by sea and by strategic

► Brown joins senior Australian officers in the field during Exercise Talisman Saber, one of many exercises USARPAC conducts with Pacific Rim allies.

airlift. Our sister services did an excellent job, and they deserve a huge vote of thanks.

Having said that, USARPAC was able to provide considerable logistics support. We sent specialist units to the base camps in Thailand and Sri Lanka,

to help push supplies and equipment forward to where they were needed. And because we have a large number of forensics specialists, we were able to make a huge contribution to the very difficult task of identifying human remains.





◀ Hawaii-based units of USARPAC's 25th Inf. Div. have deployed to Iraq as part of the Army's ongoing operations there.

We also provided such important equipment as water-purification units. In addition, we released large amounts of our contingency supplies — such as construction materials and tents — for use in the devastated areas, and we provided civil-affairs teams.

In addition, Soldiers from USARPAC's 58th Signal Battalion provided around-the-clock communications support for Combined Forces-536. The

battalion was instrumental in providing the network-bridging strategy that allowed U.S. forces deployed throughout the region access to the Department of Defense's global information grid, which provided secure and non-secure data networks, telephones and video teleconferences. The battalion continued its support around the clock throughout the duration of the operation.

In short, I think USARPAC made a meaningful contribution to the tsunami-relief effort, though I would emphasize that the bulk of our nation's contribution to that effort was made by Sailors, Marines and Airmen.

Q How do you feel about the job USARPAC Soldiers are doing in Iraq and Afghanistan?

Brown: They are performing superbly in what is obviously a very complex and challenging type of warfare. They are well prepared to succeed, and when they come back to home station their confidence in themselves and their acknowledgement of the mission's importance is reflected in their re-enlistment rates. They're staying in the Army in record numbers, and I think that speaks volumes about their dedication to the mission and to the nation.

Q What do you see in USARPAC's future?

Brown: I think our future will be a very dynamic one.

As I mentioned earlier, today's USARPAC is a force provider that




sends well-trained, well-equipped and competently led forces wherever they're needed. But we send them under the command and control of other headquarters. Over the next 18 to 24 months things will change; we'll keep all our existing missions and responsibilities, but we will also become a war-fighting headquarters. We will restructure ourselves to be able to provide forces and command and control them across the full spectrum of military operations.

That's a very exciting opportunity, but there are other things happening as well. In Alaska, for example, we just completed the fielding of the Army's third Stryker brigade combat team, and we've stood up the Army's newest airborne brigade combat team. Here in Hawaii we're going to field the

▲ Ensuring that its units are ready for combat anywhere they're needed remains USARPAC's primary mission.

Army's fifth Stryker BCT, and the 25th Infantry Division headquarters will convert to the new UEX structure.

So, over the next two years the nature and capability of the Army in this vital theater will change tremendously. It is truly an exciting time for U.S. Army, Pacific. 

As part of the Army's unit-stationing plan, many major commands will be redesignated. U.S. Army, Pacific, is one of the units to be aligned with the historic lineage of the Army. For updates on the unit-stationing plan, visit www.army.mil/modularforces.



Elements of various USARPAC units have also served in Afghanistan, where the climate and geography differ immensely from those in Hawaii.

Sandbags fly as a World War II-era artillery shell detonates safely within a mitigation bunker just a few hundred yards from homes in the town of Waikaloo, on the Big Island of Hawaii.



▲ A plaque memorializes Camp Tarawa, the WW II Marine Corps training base that covered much of what is now residential and commercial property between the town of Waimea and the sea.

AS developers on the Big Island of Hawaii began building increasing numbers of homes and commercial properties on land that used to be part of the sprawling Parker Ranch, they encountered one obstacle they hadn't expected — unexploded ordnance, and lots of it.

During the last years of World War II much of the ranch property between what is now the town of Waimea and the sea 15 miles to the east was used by the Marine Corps as a training area for the February 1945 invasion of Iwo Jima. Dubbed Camp Tarawa, the base was home to some 25,000 Marines, and when the war ended it was abandoned after only a cursory cleanup.

Left behind were thousands of individual pieces of very dangerous ordnance. The deadly harvest wasn't much of an issue when the rolling hillsides were inhabited solely by cattle, but as more people settled in the area the frequent discovery of live ordnance

Explosions in Paradise

Story and Photos by Steve Harding



American Technologies Inc. photo



▲ Sweep teams from American Technologies Inc. use detectors to make initial searches of areas thought to harbor unexploded ordnance.

◀ An ATI staffer displays an example of the type of larger ordnance often found by the sweep teams. Most ordnance is destroyed in place rather than being disarmed and removed.

Streck said, and includes hand grenades, Army and Navy artillery rounds of various sizes, mortar rounds, aerial rockets and even land mines. Japanese hand grenades, land mines, mortar rounds and rockets have also been found, having apparently been used to familiarize the Marines with enemy explosives.

“There’s a lot of stuff around,” agreed Roger Van Huss, the unexploded ordnance program manager for American Technologies Inc., the prime contractor. “Virtually all of the projectiles — the mortar and artillery rounds, as well as the rockets — are duds that did not detonate when they were fired some 60 years ago.”

“We’ve been amazed at how many explosive devices have been found in and near the towns of Waimea and Waikaloa, the places where most of the local people live

and where we’ve focused our initial efforts,” Streck said. “We’ve found between 50 and 100 live artillery and rocket rounds that were within 100 to 200 feet of existing structures or roads, as well as dozens of hand grenades. It’s just amazing.”

Awareness and Priorities

Given the number of live rounds found so close to inhabited areas, Streck said that making the public aware of the dangers posed by the ordnance has been a major part of the clean-up effort.

“We spend a lot of time meeting with local citizen’s groups, explaining the nature of the threat and what we’re doing to eliminate it,” he said. “We’re especially proud of our ordnance-awareness effort in the local schools, which helps children recognize unexploded ordnance and teaches them to avoid the devices and to quickly report them

► Hand grenades — both thrown and rifle-launched — are a common find. Here, examples of both rest on a table that also displays some of the warning signs posted throughout the area.

to authorities.”

Widespread public awareness of the potential dangers posed by the ordnance ensures that setting clearance priorities is a communal effort, Streck said.

“Our standing restoration advisory board, which I co-chair, includes representatives from the local fire and police departments, the mayor’s office, and area residents,” he said. “We also hold public meetings where we solicit public input.

“All these people and organizations share their thoughts about where they’d like us to concentrate our efforts, and then we match that list up with data about the potential density and type of ordnance in a given area,”

Streck said. “We use that to determine where we’re going to work. So it’s a joint community-Corps of Engineers decision.”

The Search is On

Once the decision is made to search a particular area, ATI’s sweep crews go in on foot to conduct an initial search.

“That’s probably the most physically challenging part of the job,” said Van Huss. “This is very rugged terrain, made up mostly of ancient lava flows that can be incredibly difficult to walk over. So it’s very time-consuming to sweep even small areas.”

While the sweep teams often find pieces of unexploded ordnance lying fully exposed on the ground, they also

look for areas where devices might be buried beneath the surface. When they find a suspect area, it’s time to call in some very specialized equipment.

“Because the subsurface lava flows have very high levels of background magnetism, we can’t use normal mine detectors and



— not to mention random explosions caused by wildfires or the occasional mudslide — led residents to demand a thorough cleanup.

Enter the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the implementing agent for the environmental restoration of formerly used defense sites, or FUDS.

A Major Task

The former Camp Tarawa was first listed as eligible for FUDS cleanup in the 1990s, said Chuck Streck, the

program manager for ordnance studies for the Corps of Engineers’ Honolulu District.

An intensive engineering evaluation and cost analysis done in 1999 identified some 137,000 acres needing ordnance clearance, at a total estimated cost of about \$645 million. Contract companies supervised by the Honolulu District began the actual clearance in January 2004.

The range of ordnance discovered on the property so far is staggering,



▲ The first layer of sandbags goes in around a piece of ordnance. The sandbag-and-plywood mitigation bunkers absorb both the blast and shrapnel of the explosion.

◀ An ATI staffer sweeps a parcel of land just a few hundred meters from Waikaloa. Most of the terrain in the area is of volcanic origin and is challenging to sweep.

similar devices,” said ATI geophysicist Neil McKay. “So we rely on two devices that can digitally discriminate between subsurface contacts. One is the MineLab Explorer II, which looks something like a standard mine detector, and the other is the EM-61 ground-penetrating radar. We use whichever device is most appropriate for that particular area, and we have a very high success rate in terms of finding buried ordnance.”

Neutralizing the Threat

Once a piece of ordnance is located, a decision is made about what to do with it, and there are only two choices: Remove it, or destroy it where it lies.

“In most cases we prefer to blow the ordnance in place,” Streck said, “because that’s safer for our workers. These devices are more than 60 years old, and in many cases they’re so unstable that attempting to move them would pose a greater hazard.”

If the ordnance is laying exposed on the surface, workers enclose it in a sandbag-and-plywood bunker called a “mitigation.” Well-established guidelines lay out exactly how large the bunker must be to mitigate the

blast and shrapnel effects of each type of ordnance.

If the ordnance is buried, an open-front barricade is placed around it. This is a four-sided metal structure open on the bottom and one side, and its purpose is to channel any “unintended detonation” away from nearby houses or other buildings should the device explode while the technician is uncovering it. Once the device is uncovered, a mitigation bunker is built around it.

The demolition experts destroy the recovered ordnance using a combination of detonation cord and what’s known as a “jet perforator,” a small shaped charge used to detonate the device’s main charge, said Rudy Martinez, an EOD technician who is part

Once a piece of ordnance is located, a decision is made about what to do with it, and there are only two choices: Remove it, or destroy it where it lies.

of the demolition team.

After everyone moves a safe distance away, a worker issues several warnings over a bullhorn. A demolition technician then detonates the disposal charge via remote control, which produces an intentionally low-key result. There’s a dull thud, some sandbags fly a few feet into the air and a small cloud of smoke rises into the sky.

“That’s just the way we like it,” Van Huss said. “We’ve removed the potential danger, and if you’re more than a few hundred yards away you never even hear the explosion.”

A Long-term Job

Since search operations commenced in 2004, workers have

removed some 700 rounds of ordnance from areas immediately adjacent to present neighborhoods, Streck said. They’ve also removed about 15 tons of scrap metal, which includes shrapnel from the exploded ordnance.

The crews first cleared those areas that are already inhabited, like Waimea and Waikaloa Town, and then moved on to areas where construction was imminent. They will clear the larger, uninhabited areas of the former Marine camp as time and funds permit. And that will be a long-term effort.

“We’ve made a good start, but there is a lot of ground still to cover,” Streck said. “And we and our contractors want to make sure this job is done right, because lives depend on it.”



▲ The payoff — a 75mm artillery shell explodes within a mitigation bunker. The contained explosion produces only a dull thud, which goes largely unnoticed by area residents.



Training CSMs in Colombia

Story and Photos by Kevin W. Sieling



Students attending the Colombian CSM course attempt to traverse an obstacle course.

THE U.S. military launched its global war on terror immediately after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, and Defense Department officials have said the services' success in capturing the followers of Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein can be attributed largely to military transformation.

U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld told reporters at a press briefing in Washington, D.C., in August 2003 that the Defense Department must continue its transformation to meet such 21st-century threats as terrorism.

"Transformation efforts are evident even today," Rumsfeld said. "Recent conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq required fewer troops and less time to assemble forces and materiel than in past wars."

In South America, government officials in Colombia say the evolution of Colombia's military forces is equally critical in fighting the war on terrorism.

Colombian President Alvaro Uribe announced he would pursue a hard line in ending Colombia's 40-year conflict revolving around the drug trade, human-rights abuses and social inequalities. He added that President George W. Bush had "set up a very effective example of the way we need to go on to fight and defeat terrorism."

U.S. Army, South, the Army component of U.S. Southern Command, has been helping the Colombian military transform its senior enlisted ranks. The establishment of Colombia's Command Sergeants Major Academy in Bogotá has contributed toward that goal. It's a joint effort by both militaries to institute the rank of command sergeant major in the Colombian army.

USARSO CSM Daniel R. Wood said the current wartime

Kevin W. Sieling works for the USARSO Public Affairs Office at Fort Sam Houston, Texas.



▲ U.S. and Colombian personnel watch as students prepare to jump from the 34-foot tower at the Tolima Military Academy Airborne School.

environment with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia prompted the commander of the Colombian armed forces to work with senior U.S. noncommissioned officers to establish criteria for the command sergeant major rank in Colombia, as well as the soldier's mission and responsibilities. Setting up the institution to train soldiers for the position followed.

The Colombian Command Sergeants Major Academy recently completed its fourth rotation, preparing roughly 40 newly promoted Colombian command sergeants major for the challenges they'll face in their war on terror.

U.S. command sergeants major provided their own experiences and lessons learned during several visits by Colombian military personnel to the Command Sergeants Major Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas, and USARSO headquarters at Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

"Historically, in Colombia and other Latin-American countries, NCOs have come from a lower socioeconomic class and, therefore, were considered inferior to the officer corps in education, experience and, in some



cases, values," said Wood. "Because NCOs were entrusted with very little authority and power, they lacked initiative."

"Noncommissioned officers followed orders; they didn't give them. In the Colombian army, for the most part, officers are responsible for conducting all training. They perform all the duties NCOs in the U.S. Army perform," Wood added.

Similarities between the U.S. and Colombian courses include training in CSM responsibilities as the senior enlisted advisor to the commander; interpersonal relationships with the staff; assigning and utilizing soldiers; caring for soldiers and their families; and human rights.

They also attend Colombian military training and doctrine classes while at the academy, and visit static displays presented by such special-operations units as the "Lanceros," the Colombian equivalent of Army Rangers.

Key liaison to the academy is USARSO SGM Carlos Zayas, a Florida Army Reservist with more than 30 years' military experience, much of it working directly with the armies of other nations as a member of special forces.

Zayas recently returned from temporary duty in Colombia, on his second tour as the direct link between the Colombian and U.S. militaries. He also is an adviser to the course commandant and NCO in charge.

"My primary mission is to ensure school administrators at the CSM academy follow the format that was originally established and complete training objectives," Zayas said. "In addition, participating in the exchange of ideas and providing support are essential to the course's success."

"The school is similar to our CSM academy," he said. "There are several challenges. The participants want change, and the course will certainly help their military grow. But army

officials in Colombia try to squeeze nine months worth of work into eight weeks. Funding is an issue, as are time considerations to allow CSMs to deploy to a combat environment.

Designing the courses was a combined effort by Colombian leaders and SOUTHCOM and USARSO sergeants major and command sergeants major, said Wood. The program of instruction for the course will evolve based on the needs of the Colombian army. 🇨🇴



▲ U.S. Army, South, SGM Carlos Zayas puts the finishing touches on a "Swiss seat" with the assistance of a Colombian soldier before rappelling at the Tolima Military Academy.

◀ Dealing with obstacle courses teaches students to use teamwork and planning to overcome challenges they encounter both in the field and in garrison.



USARSO's Continuing Mission

Story by Kevin W. Sieling

SOLDIERS and Defense Department civilians who have had the opportunity to serve in Central and South America immediately recognize the command's insignia: a white Spanish galleon, offset with a radiant red cross on a sail, enclosed in a brilliant blue circle.

The embroidered vessel has logged a few thousand miles since 1998 — on the uniform sleeves of the Soldiers who belong to the unit it represents. The patch has traveled from the command's former base at Fort Clayton, Panama; to Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico; and, now, to Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

With the relocations came workforce reductions, more than 7,500 military and civilian personnel in 1998. The command now includes fewer than 500 people, said COL Thomas A. Heaney Jr., USARSO's deputy commander for operations.

"Our mission is as important now as it has been throughout our history, given the challenges our country faces, as well as the challenges faced by other countries in our area of responsibility," said MG Jack Gardner, USARSO's commanding general. "We will continue to work with our counterpart armies to meet the challenges facing the region.

"We recently moved into our new headquarters and were honored to have members of the Honduran army as the first visitors to our command. We have an excellent relationship with them, and through such visits we can work on improving our ties," Gardner said.

"The opportunity to come to San Antonio and see the different organizations and support groups

Kevin W. Sieling works for the USARSO Public Affairs Office at Fort Sam Houston, Texas.



Kaye Richey

U.S. Army veterinarian Dr. (MAJ) Bruce Lancaster of the 993rd Medical Detachment in Denver, Colo., leans over to pour a solution of anti-parasite medicine on the backs of several cattle during the mobile veterinarian portion of Exercise New Horizons 2005 outside La Mesa, Panama.



Kevin W. Stelling

Participants in New Horizons 2005 broke ground for a number of new facilities, including schools and clinics, that will benefit the people of the region.

USARSO has developed is a wonderful experience for my soldiers,” said Col. Romeo O. Vasquez Velasquez of the Honduran armed forces. “Additionally, we are thankful for all of the assistance we have received in Honduras from the multiple activities conducted by USARSO.”

Among those is Peacekeeping Operation North, a USARSO and Honduran armed forces seminar held in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, in August 2004. The seminars consist of roundtable discussions combined with practical exercises. Delegates from regional armies share experiences, discuss challenges and reveal lessons learned during real-world peacekeeping operations worldwide, said Heaney.

This year’s PKO exercises will be held in the Dominican Republic and Brazil.

All of the exercises conducted in



Kevin W. Stelling

Soldiers from the 841st Engineer Battalion in Miami, Fla., and the 244th Engr. Company from Fort Carson, Colo., add an aluminum roof section to the schoolhouse in Macaracas, Panama.

Honduras have improved the quality of life for the general population, said Velasquez. During exercises like New Horizons, U.S. and Honduran soldiers construct schools, medical clinics and other facilities. And the exercises provide the ideal opportunity for U.S. and Honduran soldiers to exchange

training techniques and procedures, Velasquez said.

Through the USARSO-led New Horizons, Soldiers construct or repair infrastructure in Honduras and provide potable drinking water for communities. In 2004 the exercise provided four schools, two health clinics, three

retaining walls and several road improvements.

Medical-readiness training exercises also are conducted each year in the USARSO theater. MEDRETES provide such medical services as vaccinations, medical and dental treatment, and veterinary care for livestock. MEDRETE exercises through July of 2004 treated more than 5,000 people, Heaney said.

Traditionally conducted by Army Reserve Soldiers with USARSO oversight, New Horizons and MEDRETE exercises this year also provided training opportunities for National Guard Soldiers, Heaney added.

USARSO’s support of the armed forces of countries within its area of responsibility is also evident through a program called Plan Colombia, which assists the Colombian army in its crusade to rid that country of a significant terrorist threat, Heaney said.

Response to natural disasters also remains a strong joint effort. The Americas have experienced the devastation of earthquakes, mudslides and hurricanes. USARSO’s Allied

Humanitarian Forces forum, FAHUM, centers on regional cooperation, support and collaboration in combating the overwhelming effect natural and man-made disasters have on infrastructure and the general population, said MAJ Armando Santos, USARSO G-3 and FAHUM 2005 lead planner.

USARSO, the Army service component command of U.S. Southern Command, executes and is responsible for all Army operations within USSOUTHCOM’s 15.6 million square-mile area of responsibility. This AOR consists of Central and South America and the Caribbean.

USARSO provides strategic and operational command and control of assigned U.S. land, sea and air forces, defends U.S. interests and assists friendly nations in the development of their militaries. 🇺🇸

As part of the Army’s unit-stationing plan, many major commands will be redesignated. U.S. Army,

South, is one of the units to be aligned with the historic lineage of the Army. Updates on the unit-stationing plan can be found at www.army.mil/modularforces.

Kaye Richey



Navy Cdr. Robert Carroll, a physician with the Operational Hospital Support Unit (OHSU) in Great Lakes, Ill., watches as Dr. Heriberto Prado of Panama’s Ministry of Health listens to the lungs of a villager in Macaracas.

Kaye Richey



J.S. Navy medical personnel perform triage alongside medical personnel from the Army’s 801st Combat Support Hospital, from Fort Sheridan, Ill., at a school in Macaracas.



Vets Compete

Story by Beth Reece

Photos courtesy Department of Veterans Affairs

At the
National
Wheelchair
Games in
Minneapolis



◀ Opening ceremonies for the Wheelchair Games are similar to those of the Olympics, and are designed to pump up the athletes.

HOLLY Koester took life and ran when doctors told her she'd never walk again. "This wheelchair isn't an excuse. Since getting hurt I've been able to help others through a positive attitude," said Koester, who has been paralyzed from the waist down since a 1990 car accident outside Redstone Arsenal, Ala.

Koester and more than 550 veterans competed in the 25th National Veterans Wheelchair Games in Minneapolis, Minn., this summer. The largest wheelchair competition in the world, this year's event brought together veterans from World War II to operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

32 www.soldiersmagazine.com

"This wheelchair isn't an excuse. Since getting hurt I've been able to help others through a positive attitude."

The games are sponsored by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Paralyzed Veterans of America.

"When veterans come out and meet others who've already gone through the hurdles of injury, it changes the way they think about themselves and the future," said Dr. Frances Murphy, VA's deputy under-

secretary for health. "These games are a great chance to see veterans with severe injuries living life to the fullest."

Veterans test their agility, strength and speed in such sports as bowling, weightlifting, softball, quad rugby, basketball, power soccer, table tennis, swimming, track and field, archery and hand cycling.

A slalom competition also pushes participants past hurdles, ramps, platforms, slopes, textured surfaces and bridges.

"This event started years ago as an obstacle course to help injured veterans deal with the things they'd face just going down the street in a wheelchair, but it's grown into a



▲ This year's games, held in Minneapolis, Minn., featured a slalom demonstration at the Mall of America.



major-league course," said Sandy Trombetta, director of the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sport Clinic, which is held every year in Snowmass Village, Colo.

No Limits

Wheelchair sports are played much like regular sports, but with some modifications and the added challenges of being confined to the chair. Nine-ball players can't lean over the pool table as able-bodied players would, for example, and basketball or baseball players can't leap toward the ball.

"The hardest thing is knowing that I want to jump up and grab the ball, but can't," said Alan Lewis, an OIF veteran who lost his legs to an improvised explosive device. He took home a silver medal for swimming in the novice division.

Attempts to grab the ball can also send players toppling to the floor.

◀ The Wheelchair Games are known for the camaraderie and self-confidence they inspire in veterans.

While crowds grow silent as buddies right players and chairs back into position, applause always follows.

"The main thing for most of us is proving to ourselves that we can do the same things we used to do before we were injured," said Koester, who marked her 15th attendance at the games. She earned gold medals in the slalom, track and air-gun events.

The games get tougher each year with the development of lighter, stronger wheelchairs and prosthetic devices, said Trombetta. Still, many players manage to score higher than when they played on their feet, and failure is never an option.

"Competing allows veterans to exhibit our skills and perseverance. We get a chance to show that we have the courage to face adversity. This courage allows us to adopt a 'don't quit or give up' attitude," said James McGilberry, an Army veteran and paraplegic who took home a gold medal in weightlifting, plus a silver and two bronze medals for track.

"Competing in adaptive sports



▲ Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran Alan Lewis pushes his way to a silver medal in swimming.



▲ Ramon Guitard plays table tennis at his first National Veterans Wheelchair Games.



▲ The slalom takes veterans through a series of hurdles, ramps, platforms, slopes, textured surfaces, low-head clearances and bridges.



▲ Holly Koester gives her all to the slalom competition in her 15th year of attending the games.

gives veterans more self-confidence,” said Trombetta. “Introducing them to the wheelchair games shows veterans they can still pursue the things they enjoy, such as getting out of the house, shopping, camping, working or getting married. Sports and athletics can change a person’s entire perception.”

Rehabilitation

Advances in body armor have affected the types of injuries Soldiers receive and spurred changes in the rehabilitation process, said Murphy.

“Individuals who once would have died on the battlefield are now surviving with multiple injuries. We’re seeing people with a combination of injuries, from blindness and brain injury to burns and amputations,” Murphy said.

Physicians have had to adopt more comprehensive approaches to treating veterans, she said. Instead of having multiple clinics treat a variety of injuries, the VA is creating trauma centers that provide overall treatment. Physicians are also encouraging veterans to stay physically active.

“These games are an opportunity to push health promotion and disease prevention. If we can get our veterans to focus on their physical health and maintaining functionality, they’ll live longer, healthier lives,” Murphy said.

The wheelchair games stir hope in injured veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, while giving older veterans something to look forward to.

“The Wheelchair Games and the Winter Sports Clinic are two things I’ll probably do for the rest of my life, because of the camaraderie among veterans — something I no longer have without the Army,” said Lewis.

Paralympics

By 1994, Gulf War veteran John Register was a three-time All-American in track and field. He’d earned nine gold



▲ One of the hardest parts of playing basketball for Alan Lewis (shooting) is not being able to leap into the air for the ball.

medals in All-Army championships and was on track for the 1996 Olympic Team. One misstep over a hurdle derailed his plans, resulting in the amputation of his left leg.

“You figure if you’re going to lose a limb, it’s going to be in war, but most people lose them in automobile accidents,” he said.

Competing in the wheelchair games is a “give back” for Register. Already a medal winner with the U.S. Paralympics, he is a testament to the fact that life in a wheelchair doesn’t have to be restricting.

Register currently manages the U.S. Paralympic Academy in Colorado Springs. He attended the games hoping to attract newly injured veterans to the Army World Class Athlete Program, through which injured veterans can remain on active duty and participate in the U.S. Paralympics team.

“These people have a high level of fitness, and sports can help them maintain their competitive nature,” Register said.

Veterans like Register and Koester are role models who want to inspire others. Koester regularly visits VA centers to talk with newly injured Soldiers.

“It’s one thing for an able-bodied person to tell someone who’s injured that they can still do everything they want to do, but hearing it from somebody in a wheelchair is something altogether different,” Koester said.

Despite an amputated right leg, a fused left leg and a loss of vision in his right eye, Ramon Guitard doesn’t wrestle with self-pity.

“My wife sometimes asks if I think it’s fair that this happened to me. But I can’t change it. I’ve got the rest of my life to live,” said the OIF veteran. 🇺🇸



More information about the U.S. Paralympics can be found at www.usparalympics.org or by calling (719) 866-2030.

**▲ Iraq**

SSG Rena Robinson from Company B, 2nd Battalion, 121st Infantry Regiment, waits for instructions before conducting a house-to-house search in Al-Radwnea, Iraq. During Operation Mercer, Co. B conducted a cordon search for weapon caches and to gather intelligence

— Staff Sgt. Reynaldo Ramon, USAF

Changes to the Bankruptcy Law

ONCE rarely discussed in the military, bankruptcy is now a common topic as more Soldiers and their family members seek legal help for financial troubles.

Bankruptcy is a court process whereby debts are modified or "wiped out" when it is impossible for the debtor to fulfill his or her financial obligations. The goal is to give the debtor a fresh start and to somehow satisfy creditors. The bankruptcy concept has existed for centuries, and the U.S. Constitution gives Congress the power to make one set of rules for the entire nation. Thus, Congress established bankruptcy courts with judges appointed by the president.

The two most common types of bankruptcy applied to individual debts are referred to as Chapter 7 and Chapter 13.

Chapter by Chapter

Chapter 7 proceedings have a court appointed trustee who notifies the creditors, conducts meetings among the parties, sells the non-exempt property and determines what share each creditor will receive. Creditors

have 90 days from the meeting date to file their claims. Generally the debtor may keep, as exempted property, a portion of the residence or a specified property allowance, insurance proceeds, immediate personal possessions, kitchen utensils, some furniture, tools related to one's employment or occupation, and provisions to support a family for six months.

The new 2005 statutory changes are noted below.

Debts that cannot be discharged normally include taxes owed, student loans guaranteed by a government institution, alimony, child support, property obtained by false pretenses and debts not listed by the creditor in the bankruptcy petition.

Chapter 13 permits a debtor with a regular income to propose a plan to repay all or part of the debts on a monthly basis, over a period of at least three and sometimes up to five years. The trustee schedules a meeting of all creditors, who may pose questions on financial matters which the debtor must answer under oath.

The proposed plan is submitted to the court and creditors for approval. If the plan is approved, the debtor's disposable income is paid to the trustee for distribution to creditors.

The trustee may approve or disapprove the plan, even if the creditors agree or convert it to a straight Chapter 7.

The lifestyle effect of a Chapter 13 requires debtors to adjust their standards of living, since the trustee only provides the debtor

enough funds to meet expenses on a "no-frills" basis. The plan is not rigid and may be modified by the court if the debtor shows good cause to include emergency financial needs.

Common Concerns

- Once a petition for bankruptcy is filed under Chapter 7 or 13, an automatic stay results by prohibiting creditors from making further collection efforts without the permission of the court.
- One spouse may file a bankruptcy petition without approval of the other.
- Court monetary judgments obtained before the petition are not affected by the present bankruptcy action.
- The filing of any bankruptcy is harmful to the debtor's credit rating, since it can remain on all credit reports for up to 10 years.
- Military members may be placing their security clearances in jeopardy by both the accumulation of large debts and the bankruptcy itself, since financial conduct is a matter of concern for officials who approve security clearances.
- Bankruptcy relief for one debtor does not relieve the other joint debtors and co-sureties for the same debts.

2005 Legislative Changes:

Effective in October, Congress amended the law to tighten bankruptcy relief. While there are a number of new provisions, the three major changes are:

- Creation of a "means-testing" formula that replaces a presumption of legitimacy by looking at the debtor's monthly income, minus certain allowed expenses, multiplied by 60. If the amount exceeds certain benchmarks, (roughly amounting to an extra \$100

per month), the filing will be presumed abusive — and if not rebutted, the court may dismiss the case or convert it to a filing under Chapter 13.

- State exemptions permitted are curtailed by requiring the debtor to reside in the state in which exemptions are claimed for at least 730 days before bankruptcy filing. Additionally, homestead exemptions may not exceed \$125,000 for any property acquired within 1,215 days before filing the petition.

- Debtors, at their own expense, must complete a credit-counseling course within 180 days before filing a petition.

When Faced With A Possible Bankruptcy Action:

- Check with your Army Community Service office budget adviser to assist in creating a budget, acceptable to creditors, that creates a schedule for partial payments to each creditor until all debts are satisfied.

- Consult with an attorney in your legal assistance office for guidance should the ACS adviser's efforts fail. Most legal assistance offices do not represent clients in bankruptcy court but will refer clients to local law firms.

Clients being referred to local attorneys should come prepared with the following information:

- A list of all debts owed, plus the names and addresses of each creditor. (Caution: Debts that are not listed in a petition are not discharged.)
- A list of all property the client owns.
- A list of all income and all assets.
- A list of the monthly expenses and an analysis of another alternative to bankruptcy.

Borrowers Beware!

The ease with which credit and credit cards are offered can quickly place a Soldier, and family members, at financial risk if this easy credit is abused.

Also, "debt consolidation" schemes do not erase debts and often add another layer of costs that increase the original debt.

Just as marriage can be said to be the chief cause of divorce, the failure to act prudently by avoiding the accumulation of huge debts is the chief cause of bad credit, bankruptcy and family discord.

Know the Law

Steven Chucala is chief of client services in the Office of the Staff Judge Advocate at Fort Belvoir, Va.

Pentagon

G.I. JOE STILL SERVING

AFTER 40 years of dedicated service, the GI Joe action figure has reported for duty at the Pentagon.

Located just down the hall from the Army chief of staff's office and next to the GEN Douglas MacArthur corridor, GI Joes representing Soldiers from World War II to Iraq are on display in two large glass cases.

Commemorating the 60th anniversary of World War II and honoring all currently serving Soldiers, the displays also depict a scene of GI Joe at the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery to remind viewers of all those who have died in combat.

The term "GI Joe" was immortalized by the World War II reporter Ernie Pyle in his 1943 book, "Here is Your War: Story of G.I. Joe." The action figure itself was developed by Don Levine, a former GI who fought in the Korean War.

Last year marked the 40th anniversary of the GI Joe action figure, which has also been inducted into the Toy Hall of Fame.

Posting GI Joe to the Pentagon was the idea of retired LTC Michael Warsocki. While assigned to the Joint Staff, Warsocki felt the open display cases in the newly renovated section of the Pentagon needed something unique.



Warsocki has great expectations for the GI Joes during their stay at the Pentagon. "I hope they will touch a heartstring and bring back fond memories for Soldiers and civilians alike. The display pays homage to two great things: the American Soldier and GI Joe." — *By Janina DeJesus and Tiffany Capehart*



Attend Law School



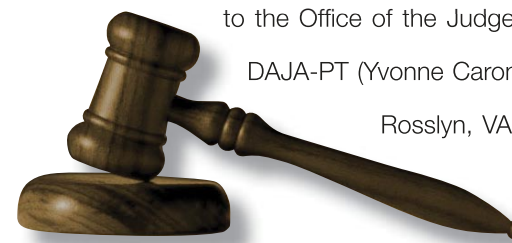
AT GOVERNMENT EXPENSE

THE Office of the Judge Advocate General is accepting applications for the Army's Funded Legal Education Program, which sends up to 15 active-duty officers to law school at government expense.

Selected officers will attend law school beginning in the fall of 2006 and remain on active duty while attending.

The program is open to second and first lieutenants and captains. Applicants must have at least two, but not more than six, years of total active federal service when training begins.

Officers interested in applying should register for the fall offering of the Law School Admission Test. Applicants must send their requests through command channels, including branch managers at the Army Human Resources Command, with a copy furnished to the Office of the Judge Advocate General, ATTN: DAJA-PT (Yvonne Caron), 1777 North Kent Street, Rosslyn, VA 22209-2194. Applications are due Nov. 1.



Eligibility requirements are outlined in chapter 14 of Army Regulation 27-1, "The Judge Advocate General's Funded Legal Education Program." Local staff judge advocate offices can provide further information.

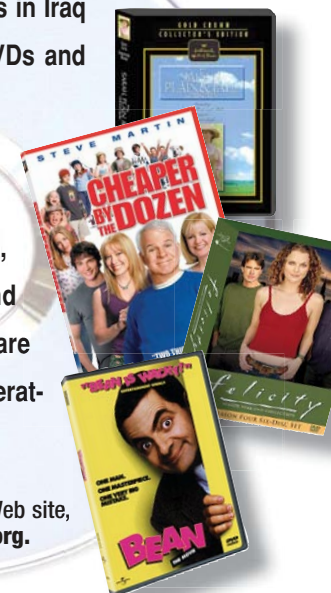
Wanted

DVDS FOR TROOPS

HELP a Soldier relax. Movie collections in morale, welfare and recreation facilities in Iraq and Afghanistan need new DVDs and CDs to loan to Soldiers.

Desired DVDs include new releases, westerns, drama, military, comedy, oldies, romance, sitcoms, television series and books. Duplicated donations are distributed to other forward operating bases in Iraq.

To visit the DVDs4Troops Web site, go to www.dvds4troops.org.



West Point

MENTORS NEEDED AT WEST POINT

THE U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., is looking for a few good military academy liaison officers.

These MALOs help future cadets through the admissions process and are mentors to the cadets when they arrive at West Point.

"This is an opportunity to develop relationships," said LTC Dean Chang, the current MALO for New Jersey. "If someone wants to give back to West Point, this is a good way to do it."

The position is open to Reserve officers only, but anyone can volunteer to help with recruiting, said Chang. According to MAJ Shelly Jackson, media officer for the admissions office, there are 231 MALOs and 1,436 volunteers

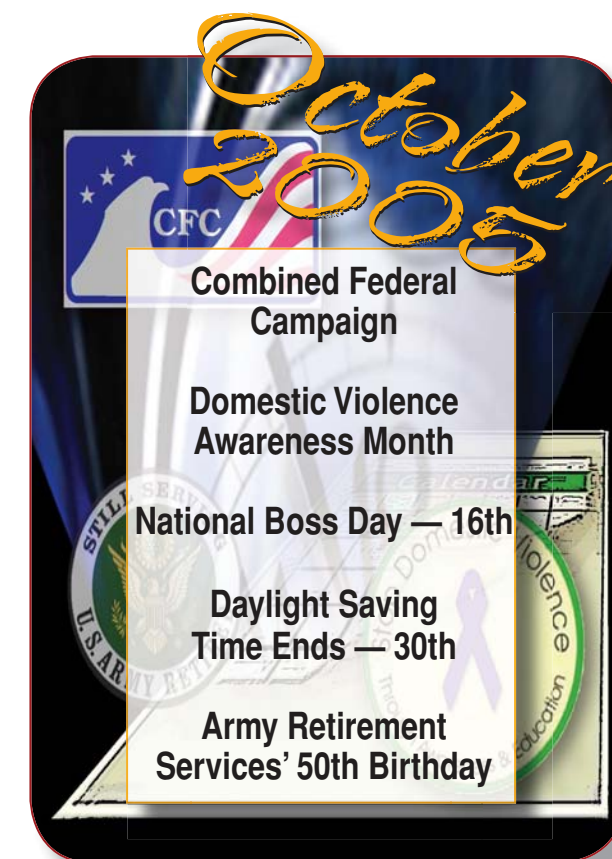
serving West Point.

MALOs are assigned by congressional districts and must undergo training that includes an online tutorial, shadowing a current MALO for one year and attendance at the annual MALO conference at West Point.

The most rewarding aspects of the MALO experience, said Chang, are the relationships developed and the benefits given to the academy.

"If you're still undecided about whether you want to help, think of this as your way to help us beat Navy," Jackson said.

For details call Jackson at (800) 822-2769, ext. 5701, or (845) 938-5701. — *Jennifer Dowling*



Mastering Mine Protection

Story and Photos by SGT Michael J. Carden



MINE PROTECTION

MEIOCC

Mine and Explosives Information
Operations Coordination Center

EHAT

Explosive Hazards and
Awareness Training



➤ SGT Ronald Todd Gates (*far right*), mine detector trainer, demonstrates sweeping techniques to Soldiers using the Army Navy/ Portable Special Search-14 mine detector.

TRADITIONALLY, Army engineer units are responsible for a range of construction and demolition projects. Specific units are known for their abilities to rapidly repair and construct runways, bridges and roads. Others are known for their knowledge of demolitions and explosives.

One engineer battalion that's deployed to Iraq has been challenged with a task much different from its regular role.

The Alabama Army National Guard's 200th Engineer Battalion may be trained and experienced in bridge construction and construction management, but its current mission is to command and conduct operations as the Iraqi theater's only Mine and Explosives Information Operations Coordination Center, also known as the MEIOCC.

The MEIOCC is responsible for managing and tracking all of the explosive hazards in the Operation Iraqi Freedom theater. This includes improvised explosive devices and unexploded ordnance. Unit engineers also track the operations of several nongovernmental organizations in Iraq that specialize in clearing mine fields, said LTC Eddie Porter, commander of the 200th Engr. Bn. and MEIOCC.

The battalion mobilized for active

duty in December. Its Soldiers trained at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., to learn as much as they could about operating a MEIOCC in a combat zone.

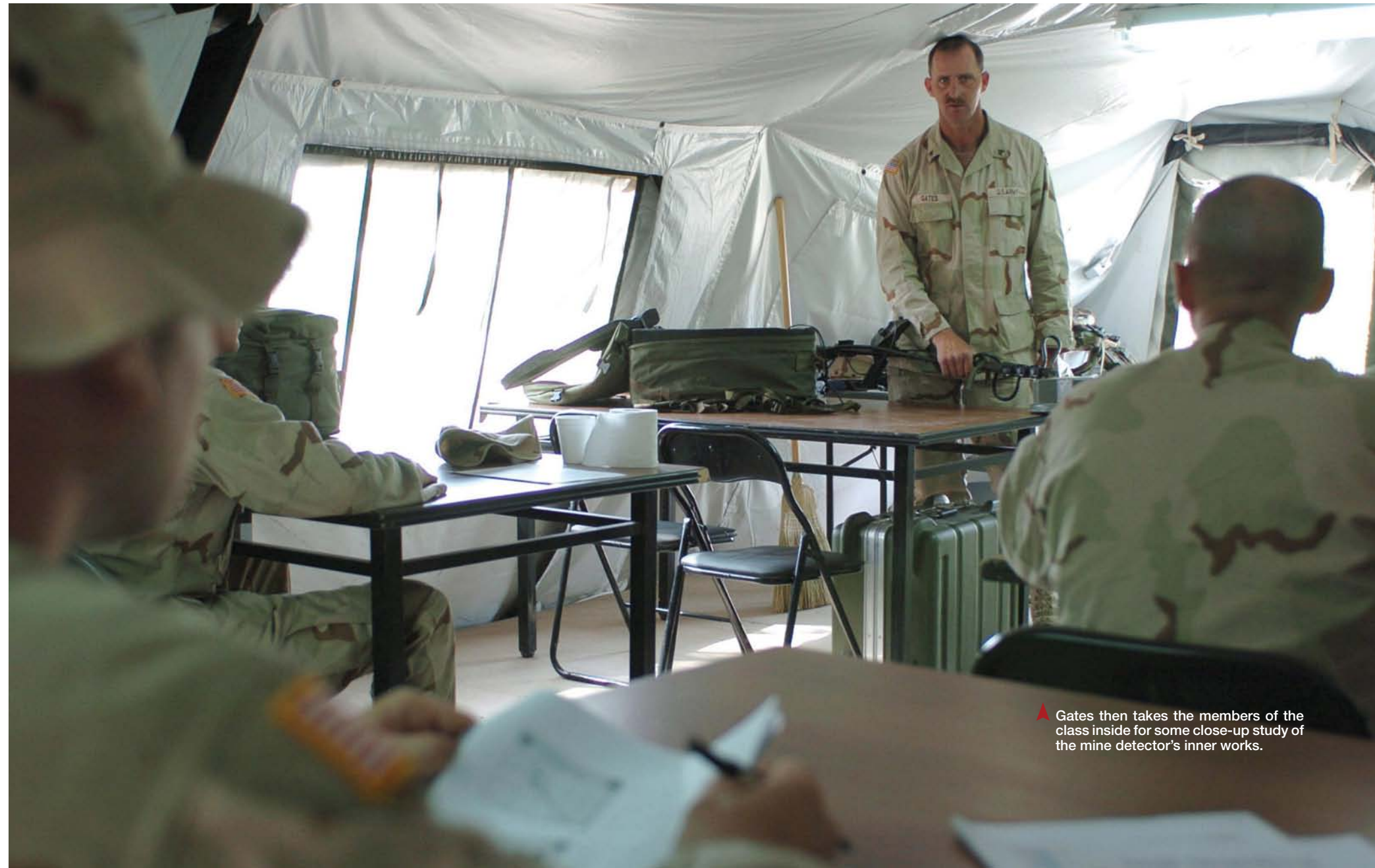
Porter said that when he and his Soldiers received the order and mission for their deployment to Baghdad, they had no idea what they were getting into.

"We didn't even know what a MEIOCC was," he said.

Once they began training for the mission, they learned that the MEIOCC concept originated in the mid-1990s, during the U.S. involvement in Kosovo. There were so many mines and so much other ordnance strewn about the country that officials at the Army's engineer schools and commanders on the ground felt that a mine and explosives center was needed to track and manage all the ordnance in the area of operations. The center in Kosovo was such a success that the concept grew into the MEIOCC, Porter said.

"We had a lot of information crammed into our brains during a lot of long days and short nights at Fort Leonard Wood," said SGT Anthony Mills, "because, traditionally, we're in command and control of engineer construction operations and projects. Now we've found ourselves dealing a lot more with mines and explosives training."

The Soldiers learned that much of the job in Iraq would involve training



▲ Gates then takes the members of the class inside for some close-up study of the mine detector's inner works.



and teaching. The bulk of the 40-man headquarters detachment that deployed with the battalion is composed of two explosive hazards and awareness training teams. There is also a mine-detector training team, known as Team 14, Porter said.

The EHAT teams are responsible for training all coalition and American troops who deploy to the OIF theater, making them aware of enemy munitions and explosive hazards — such as homemade bombs — which insurgents may use. Troops also learn how to deal with those hazards, Porter said.

“All Soldiers deployed to Iraq have to receive EHAT training,” Porter said. “It’s our job to make sure they get it.”

Team 14 trains combat engineers in Iraq on the Army Navy/Portable Special Search-14 mine-detector system, which is the Department of Defense’s latest development in mine-detector technology, said 1LT Steven

“One of the most rewarding aspects of our job is that we can directly see results because of the training we provide,” Porter said. “We can’t pinpoint this, but we know that what we do saves lives.”

Witherington, Team 14’s officer in charge.

The AN/PSS-14 mine-detector system combines ground-penetrating radar and highly sensitive metal-detector technology to find metallic and nonmetallic objects buried in the ground, Porter said.


“It’s an object detector, rather than just a mine detector,” Porter said. “Our guys teach Soldiers how to operate the AN/PSS-14 well enough to know what an object in the ground is before they ever even see it.”

MEIOCC Soldiers also perform tasks that may be different from their normal jobs in communications, mechanics or construction, Porter said.

For example, what would normally be the battalion’s communications section now manages the MEIOCC’s tactical minefield database systems, Porter said.

“We’ve all diversified because of what’s happening in the world, and because of our civilian experiences and the training we’ve received,” Mills said. “When you combine all those things, it makes for a very diverse force, a very strong team.”

“One of the most rewarding aspects of our job is that we can directly see results because of the training we provide,” Porter said. “We can’t pinpoint this, but we know that what we do saves lives.”

More than 112 combat engineers in Iraq have graduated from the mine-detector course and are now proficient with the AN/PSS-14 system, Porter said. The two EHAT teams have traveled all across the country, successfully training more than 9,000 Soldiers, helping them become more aware of the insurgent’s number one choice of attack — IEDs. 



▲ During a class at Forward Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, CPL Justin Mack gives a block of information about probing for land mines.

Defenders of Baghdad

Story by SSG Raymond Piper

TRAINING for the “Defenders of Baghdad,” as the new troops of the Iraqi army’s 5th Brigade, 6th Division, call themselves, had begun some two months earlier. During those eight weeks they learned new tactics and procedures to help them defend their country against any threat.

“This is an important day for the people of Iraq. These men before you are all volunteers and have sworn to defend Baghdad,” said Task Force Baghdad commander MG William G. Webster Jr. at the unit’s activation ceremony.

“All of the country’s TV stations are here filming the event so the people can see the ceremony in their homes,” said Col. Mohamed Hashim Al-Musawy, an aide to the 5th Bde. commander. “As our training goes on, the citizens, houses and streets of Iraq will be safer. If the U.S. forces keep helping us in our training, we will control the Iraqi streets, and we’ll protect the citizens from the explosions the terrorists carry out against the Iraqis.”

The newest Iraqi army brigade is responsible for defending the Green Zone and surrounding areas in Baghdad.

“I think they will play a vital role in the freedom of Iraq, especially around Baghdad. These soldiers will show the American and Iraqi people that they are up to the task,” said CSM Robert Taylor, of the 8th Cavalry Regiment.

The 5th Bde., composed of more than 2,500 Iraqi soldiers, received training from Soldiers of the 8th Cav. Regt. and Headquarters and HQs. Co., 4th Battalion, 64th Armor Regt.


The Iraqis were trained on a variety of tasks, including reflexive fire, basic marksmanship and room clearing.

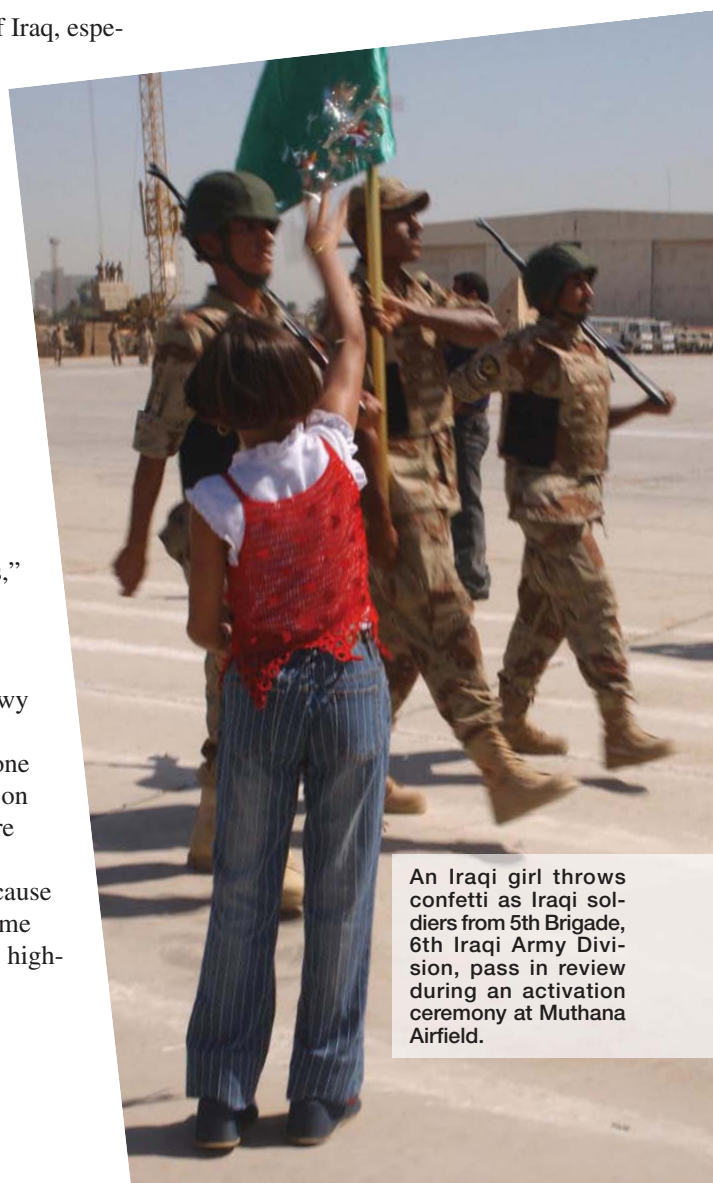
“I feel proud that the Iraqi soldiers can defend Iraq. I hope God will make them brave and keep them safe,” Al-Musawy said. “We have soldiers who are very young, and we thought that they might fail, but because of the Americans who gave us good training, they made it.

“In the past, men didn’t join the Iraqi army for fear that terrorists would kill them, but now, there are many volunteers,” he said.

“I learned from our training that the new soldiers are very eager to be trained and they’ve proved it during the operations they’ve conducted in various areas around Baghdad,” Al-Musawy added.

“They may not be as good as American Soldiers today, but one day they will be just as good,” Taylor said. “They put their lives on the line every day, either at checkpoints or on patrols, and they are right beside us doing the same things we’re doing.”

Al-Musawy said that the Iraqi troops have been successful because of their training and they will continue to get better. “I hope the same unit will train the next brigade, so the new soldiers will receive the high level of training.” 



An Iraqi girl throws confetti as Iraqi soldiers from 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, pass in review during an activation ceremony at Muthana Airfield.

Fighting Afghanistan's Taliban

Story and Photos by SSG Jacob Caldwell

COMBINED Task Force Bayonet forces engaged Taliban forces in some of the fiercest fighting in Afghanistan this year, during a 20-day mission in northern Kandahar Province, said CTFB officials.

Led by the 3rd Battalion, 319th Field Artillery Regiment, coalition forces kicked off the military operation known as Diablo Reach Back in the rugged, mountainous terrain of

SSG Jacob Caldwell is assigned to the Combined Task Force Bayonet Public Affairs Office.

Shah Wali Kot district.

The coalition included soldiers and policemen from the Afghan National Army; Afghan National Police; the Romanian army, and U.S. forces from the 319th FA Regt.; 2nd Battalion, 504th Infantry Regt.; and the 173rd Airborne Brigade.

Diablo Reach Back was intended to clear the area of anti-coalition forces, so that the provincial government of Kandahar can establish a permanent presence and a good line of communication in the remote northern district, said LTC Bert Ges, commander of

the 3rd Bn., 319th FA Regt., and Task Force Gundevil.

The Shah Wali Kot district is considered to be one of the last Taliban strongholds in Kandahar Province, but that may soon end, as the district residents' patience with anti-coalition forces grows thin, Ges said.

"For the most part, the people out here are tired of the Taliban," said Ges. "Because there is no government representation out here, the Taliban come out of the hills and take residents' food, beat and otherwise harass them, and then leave."

Ges said establishing security in the district is the first priority, but another is to strengthen the positions of the district leadership. Once this is done, reconstruction efforts can begin in the embattled region.

At the time this article was published, Ges planned to establish a satellite police station in Gumbad.

"Gumbad to me is key terrain," he said. "The people there support us. We've identified a building, and we want to rent it. We're going to put 20 to 40 ANP troops there and augment them with 16 to 40 Soldiers."

The collective group would work on building the area's infrastructure, first by establishing communications and then constructing a police substation, Ges said.

"I want to get some troops up there," said Ges. "I realize they may be living out of their vehicles for the first few weeks. But I want to get a foothold there and then expand from there. Every time we're in the village, the residents know that we can provide security. They see the helicopters and hear the artillery fire. But when we leave, they know the Taliban can return. That's why we want to show a permanent presence in Gumbad."

Security has been a challenge in the district. During Diablo Reach Back, Soldiers experienced minor engagements near the villages of Zamto Kalay and Chenartu. And Soldiers from Company D, 2nd Bn., 504th Inf. Regt., met heavier resistance near Takht Kalay and in the Gumbad valley.

"The enemy we're fighting now have been around for a while," said Ges. "They know how we fight, so we have to be very quick and aggressive. All of the operations that we have participated in during Diablo Reach Back have included ANA soldiers. They do



▲ MAJ Kevin Bigelman, Task Force Gundevil's operations officer, interacts with some of Gumbad's younger residents.

"We always end up with what is called a shura, a meeting with the village leaders and elders."

the bulk of the fighting."

MAJ Kevin Bigelman, operations officer for the 3rd Bn., 319th FA Regt., said, "The ANA did a great job. They were well-equipped, well-led, and they did exactly what they were tasked to do, which was to clear the objective area and the surrounding towns."

Maintaining and improving relationships with the various village elders is essential to the success of future operations in the village, Ges said.

"We don't want to come into an

area, clear it and then leave," said Ges. "We want to clear the area and then go right into a civil-affairs mode."

"What we have been doing during this operation is bringing the district chief and the district police chief with us to show them the conditions in the area and let them hear what the people are saying," said Ges. "We always end up with what is called a shura, a meeting with the village leaders and elders."

"And then we do a village assessment. We review all of the villagers' various issues and concerns, collect information about all the potential projects they'd like to have completed and take the information back to Kandahar, to the provincial headquarters, where Afghan officials review and prioritize the recommended projects," Ges said. ■



▲ Speaking through an interpreter, LTC Bert Ges, commander of Task Force Gundevil, discusses issues with village elders during a shura held in Gumbad, a small village in Shah Wali Kot District in northern Kandahar Province.

NMHF Hosts Wounded Iraqi Vets

ON June 30, the **National Maritime Heritage Foundation** hosted its second schooner trip for wounded Soldiers convalescing at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C.

About 30 veterans and their families sailed aboard the replica 19th-century schooner *American Spirit* for a two-hour trip on the Potomac and Anacostia rivers.

Offering Soldiers and their families an opportunity to see the nation's capital from the water, the voyages are a way for members of the foundation to give something back to those who have served their country in war, said Eric Weill, a volunteer crewman on the schooner.

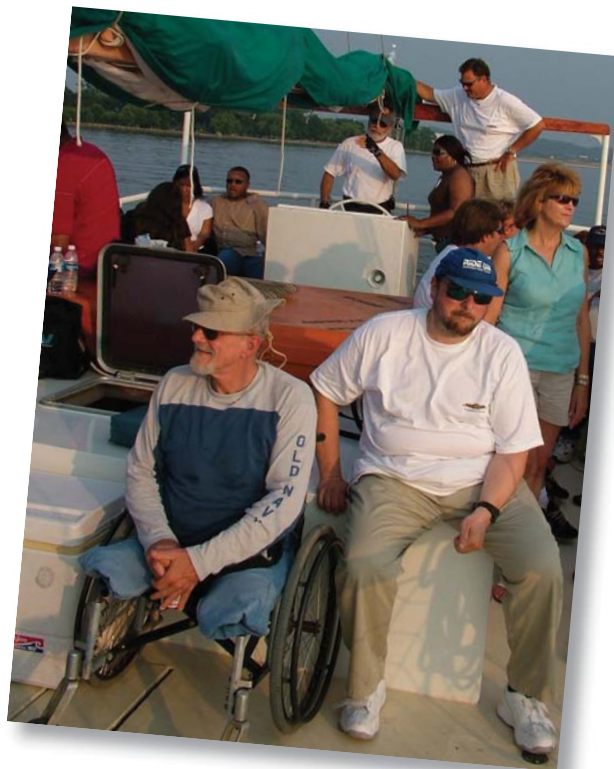
"It is with the greatest honor that we host these brave

"NMHF is proud to be able to support the troops who have done so much for our country."

men and women on our ship," said Duncan Hood, a spokesman for the excursion program. "We've seen a great amount of enthusiasm from everyone participating in the program, and we look forward to

the continued growth and success of this endeavor."

"The trip is awesome and it gets me away from the hospital," said SPC Jonathan Blevins, who returned from Afghanistan in March. "I love seeing Washington, D.C., this




way; it's very therapeutic."

"I know a trip like this is good for these vets. I see them really open up and get very animated once they're onboard," said volunteer ship pilot Capt. Bill Washington.

Natalie Cobb, the wife of wounded Army National Guard Soldier SGT Steven Cobb, said that the ride was very therapeutic for her as well as for her husband.

Danny Soto, an appeals officer for the Disabled American Veterans organization, said the purpose of the sailing excursions is to get the veterans out of hospital so they can get their minds off their injuries.

"NMHF is proud to be able to support the troops who have done so much for our country," said Kevin Traver, the NMHF's executive director. "Whatever we can do for them does not compare with what they've done for us." 



**350,000 SOLDIERS DRIVE THIS CAR.
AND THERE'S ROOM FOR MORE.**



Get behind the No. 16 car driven by Greg Biffle—it was built through teamwork and fueled by pride. For over 367 years, the Guard has answered the call to protect our country and community. If you're ready to answer the call and join an elite fighting force—in the Army National Guard, **YOU CAN.**



1-800-GO-GUARD • www.1-800-GO-GUARD.com

SUBWAY is a registered trademark of Doctor's Associates Inc. National Guard used by permission of the National Guard Bureau. Roush Racing and Greg Biffle's name and/or likeness used by authority of Roush Racing, Livonia, Michigan.

Staff Sergeant Gregory Travis. 54B Chemical Specialist. U.S. Army Reserve

IT'S NOT YOUR EVERYDAY JOB.

©2003. Paid for by the United States Army. All rights reserved.

AN ARMY OF ONE[®]
ARMY RESERVE



After serving on Active Duty, a transition to the Army Reserve allows you to work in a challenging environment and receive important benefits.
For details see your Reserve Component Career Counselor or Retention NCO. goarmyreserve.com/ps